

MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

*In compliance with a resolution of the Senate, respecting an Increase of the Ordnance Corps.*

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JUNE 3, 1836.

Read, ordered to be printed, and referred to the Committee on Military Affairs.

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WASHINGTON, June 3, 1836.

*To the Senate :*

In compliance with the resolution of the Senate of the 27th ultimo, requesting the President to inform the Senate "whether any increase or improvement of organization is needed in the ordnance corps," I have the honor to state that I entertain no doubt of the propriety of increasing the corps, and that I concur in the plan proposed for this purpose in the accompanying report from the Secretary of War.

ANDREW JACKSON.

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WAR DEPARTMENT, June 2, 1836.

SIR : I have the honor to return the resolution of the Senate of the 27th ultimo, calling on you for information in regard to the propriety of an increase of the ordnance corps, and to transmit a report from the colonel of ordnance on the subject.

I am authorized to say that the Secretary of War believes an increase of that corps necessary and proper, and I have reason to believe that the organization recommended in Colonel Bomford's report would meet his views. It is proper, however, to state that this organization differs from that proposed in a letter from this Department some days since, to the Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs of the Senate. In that it was proposed to add to the present corps ten first and ten second lieutenants. In this, the proposition is to add two majors, ten first, and ten second lieutenants.

Very respectfully,

Your most obedient servant,

C. A. HARRIS,  
*Acting Secretary of War.*

The PRESIDENT of the United States.

## ORDNANCE OFFICE,

*Washington, May 30, 1836.*

SIR: In answer to the resolution of the Senate of the 27th instant, calling upon the President of the United States "to inform the Senate whether any increase or improvement of organization is needed in the ordnance corps," and which has been referred by the War Department to this office, I have the honor to report that the entire force of this department is devoted to the arming and equipping the whole body of the militia of the United States, under the act of Congress of 1808, in providing the armament of the fortifications of the country, in arming and equipping the regular troops, and at present, in supplying the increased military force demanded for active service in the field.

For an efficient discharge of the foregoing duties, the present strength of the department is found to be inadequate, and this deficiency will be rendered apparent by reference to former organizations.

The law of May 14, 1812, which originated the Ordnance department, provided for one commissary general, one assistant commissary general, four deputy commissaries, eight assistant deputy commissaries, and this number was increased in the subsequent year, (August 2, 1813,) by an addition of five captains. By the law of 8th February, 1815, the corps was augmented to the number of 44 officers, and this organization remained until, by the law of March 2, 1821, the Ordnance department was merged in the artillery, and its duties were performed by officers of that arm, under a system of details, until the passage of the law of 5th April, 1832, when the defects of that system having been rendered fully apparent, the present organization, which gives to the department 14 officers, and the additional aid of selections of lieutenants from the artillery, went into operation.

A comparative statement of the duties and responsibilities of the officers of the department at the several periods heretofore named, with those they are at the present time charged with, would present conclusive evidence of the importance of an increase even greater than that proposed in the form of a bill which I shall have the honor to annex to this report.

In the early years of the existence of the Ordnance department, the number of arsenals and amount of public property in them was comparatively limited, and although during the war the operations of the department were active and considerable, yet they were chiefly confined to preparations for the then existing emergency, without, as at present, looking to the future permanent defence and security of the country, by an extensive provision of every description of arms and munitions.

The increased, and still increasing, number of arsenals, the armament of the forts, the militia, the volunteer forces, and the regular army, constitute a mass of duty requiring for its performance a corps of officers increased in a ratio corresponding with the magnitude of these important objects.

The present number of arsenals and ordnance stations amounts to twenty-two, and it is presumed that to this number several more will be added, the construction and subsequent command of which will increase the necessity for the proposed augmentation of officers through whom the large amount of money appropriated for this purpose will have to be disbursed.

The public property pertaining to the Ordnance department may be estimated at not less than \$20,000,000 in value, and this vast amount is increasing by the addition of the product of each annual appropriation.

The application of these appropriations, and preservation of these products, are duties which ought not to be intrusted to inexperienced hands; and the department is impressed with the importance of an addition to its present number of officers, to be legally and permanently attached, for the purpose of enabling it to conduct all its operations by those in whose skill and experience it might place the fullest confidence.

The extent of some of the commands, and the execution of some of the duties of the department, should be confided to the charge of officers possessing experience and rank commensurate with their importance, and any organization that should not increase the number of the higher, or field grades, and thus place the ordnance on an equality in this respect with other staff departments of the army, would not, it is confidently believed, afford the means which are positively required to meet those great and increasing duties and responsibilities imposed by the condition and wants of the country.

The evident necessity for the number of field officers herein proposed will appear from the following plan for their disposition, viz :

One colonel, to command the department ;

One lieutenant colonel and two majors, to be employed as inspectors of arsenals and armories, of cannon and foundries, and of small-arms and military equipments; and

Two majors, to command the two principal arsenals of construction.

All the foregoing duties and commands are deemed to be fully equal in their importance and the responsibility involved, to the duties and commands of officers of similar rank in the corps of engineers, and in the line of the army.

Under the law of the 5th of April, 1832, which authorizes the President of the United States to *select* from the regiments of artillery such number of lieutenants as may be necessary to aid in the performance of the duties of the Ordnance department, the several arsenals have been heretofore partially supplied with officers of that grade; but the recent and continued demand for these officers, caused by the more active operations of the regiments of artillery, has necessarily deprived the Ordnance department of the services of its assistants, at a moment too, when its duties have become extremely active, arduous, and important.

The system, therefore, of *selection*, or detail, above alluded to, is, in its principle and operation, wholly unsuited to the wants of the service; and in its effect, positively pernicious, inasmuch as a state of war, which increases the necessity for additional aid and exertion in the Ordnance department, produces the opposite result, in a reduced force, and a consequent diminution of services.

This embarrassing state of things will, in a measurable degree, cease, in the event of a legal augmentation to the ordnance *proper*, as proposed in the present instance.

The additional field officers and subalterns will place at the disposal of the department an efficient and experienced number of officers, at all times adequate to the management of its great operations; and under the pressure arising from sudden or unexpected requisitions, the energy of

the department would no longer be crippled by the operation of a system which, at present, diminishes and seriously impairs it.

The immense amount and value of public property now confided to the control of the officers of the Ordnance department, and the importance of managing it with care and skill, the large annual appropriations for the service of the department, and the necessity for its judicious disbursement and application, are, in themselves, objects demanding a melioration of the present imperfect system, by substituting an organized corps of officers, efficient in its numerical force and talents—a corps whose efforts shall be directed to its own reputation, and those great interests of the country which the law has confided to its management and care.

The officer of artillery, detailed for temporary service in a department, the duties of which he is, in a great measure, unacquainted with, and in which he has no abiding personal interests, cannot be expected to evince that degree of enthusiastic devotion to duty which springs from an attachment to an institution, in the welfare and usefulness and *honor* of which, individual reputation is deeply involved. His *own* corps is his favorite, and when detached for brief and uninteresting service, the detail may be acceded to, partially with a view to relief from the fatigues of the line, or else (as is known to have been the case) he yields to the order, in direct opposition to his wishes.

In either event, the short term of his ordnance service is perhaps one of constant aversion, and not sufficiently durable to afford him the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the various duties of the department, without which (or even during the course of its acquisition) the services of the officer are far less valuable than constant experience and a direct interest in the corps would render them.

By the law of the 14th of May, 1812, ordnance officers were allowed the rank and pay of infantry officers, with additional rations, and to captains, forage. The law of the 8th of February, 1815, gave to all officers of the department the pay of dragoons, with the exception of forage of those below the rank of field officers.

The public duties of officers of ordnance require them to travel within limited circuits, to procure supplies, attend to the transportation of property, and for various other purposes; and the existing regulations not permitting a charge for transportation when the distance travelled is less than twenty miles, the expense of private horses employed in the public service is equivalent to a reduction in the pay of the officers thus situated. Under these circumstances, it would be but justice to place the officers of this corps upon an equality, as regards pay, with the dragoons.

The foregoing report is respectfully submitted, under a strong conviction of the importance of the proposed increase of the Ordnance department.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. BOMFORD,

*Colonel of Ordnance.*

C. A. HARRIS, Esq.,

*Acting Secretary of War.*

An act providing for the increase of the Ordnance Department.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorized to add to the Ordnance department, whenever he may deem it expedient to increase the same, two majors, ten first lieutenants, and ten second lieutenants, and that the pay and emoluments of the officers of the said department shall be the same as those allowed to the officers of the regiments of dragoons ; and that they shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

SEC. 2. *Be it further enacted,* That so much of the 4th section of the act passed April 5, 1832, for the organization of the Ordnance department as authorizes the officers of ordnance to receive the same pay and emoluments now allowed artillery officers, shall be construed to include the ten dollars per month additional pay to every officer in the actual command of a company, as compensation for the duties and responsibilities with respect to clothing, arms, and accoutrements of the company, under the authority of the second section of the act passed 2d March, —, giving further compensation to the captains and subalterns of the army of the United States in certain cases : Provided, that the officers of the Ordnance department claiming the compensation for such duties and responsibilities shall have been actually in the command of enlisted men of the ordnance, and thereby incurred the aforesaid responsibilities.

SEC. 3. *Be it further enacted,* That all officers and enlisted men of the Ordnance department shall be subject to the rules and articles of war.

SEC. 4. *Be it further enacted,* That the compensation hereafter to be allowed to such ordnance storekeepers as shall be designated as paymasters, shall not exceed the pay and allowances of captain of ordnance.



an act provided for the defence of the Ordnance Department.

Section 1. It is enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States do, and he is hereby authorized to do, all such things as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the Ordnance Department, and to see that the same are carried out, and that the officers of the Ordnance Department shall be held to the same as if they were officers of the Ordnance Department, and that the same shall be carried out by the President.

Section 2. It is further enacted, That so much of the Ordnance Department as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the Ordnance Department, and to see that the same are carried out, and that the officers of the Ordnance Department shall be held to the same as if they were officers of the Ordnance Department, and that the same shall be carried out by the President.

Section 3. It is further enacted, That so much of the Ordnance Department as may be necessary and proper to carry out the purposes of the Ordnance Department, and to see that the same are carried out, and that the officers of the Ordnance Department shall be held to the same as if they were officers of the Ordnance Department, and that the same shall be carried out by the President.



